

GANES CHEMICALS

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March 30, 1999

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Mr. Kasturi Srinivasachar
Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
U.S. Food & Drug Administration
5630 Fischers Lane, Room 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

Dear Mr. Srinivasachar:

Let me begin by saying how much I enjoyed your presentation at the recent NAPM meeting in New York City. I thought the introduction to BACPAC II was helpful in determining my response to BACPAC I.

While I agree that BACPAC I is a big step in allowing post-approval changes, I still would like to make the case that you have placed the emphasis in the wrong location. As I stated during my presentation, DMFs are currently written by API manufacturers to such an extent as to allow changes inside the file process. This means that the customer initially doesn't have to know how the process is being run and therefore, can't determine when a change actually occurs. This is done by the API manufacturer to allow flexibility as he learns and operates the process at a commercial scale. Most processes are filed early in the learning curve, therefore, are not fully understood or developed. This occurs because of the need for speed to the market place, both from a commercial perspective and from a patient perspective.

I believe that the FDA should take a close look at who controls the process chemistry and make them the responsible party. While I recognize that review of DMFs could put additional work on the FDA's already taxed staff, I do believe the effort would not be a large increase if we could determine a mechanism for controlling the filing of DMFs. By this I mean, once a DMF is accessed by an applicant, then that DMF could in fact be reviewed and post changes to that DMF would automatically be considered for review. If a DMF was never accessed by an applicant, then that DMF would remain dormant. This should be a relatively simple process within the agency and controlled by how the numbers are applied to the DMF. Much like industry numbers its SOPs, once a DMF is accessed and initially approved, then its code number would indicate that any subsequent changes could be applied and reviewed as they occur. I believe for FDA and industry to get a true picture of post-approval changes, this needs to occur at the DMF level.

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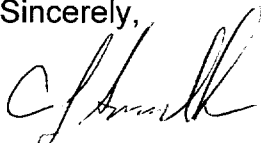
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In addition, I feel that the initial purpose of the DMF is to provide the API manufacturer with some security that his intellectual property will be protected. In the ever-growing Generic market, this becomes more and more important as economics is the overall driving force in this business segment. In order for both parties to be protected, i.e., the API manufacturer's intellectual property and the applicant's formulation, we need to determine a better way to review post-approval changes and ensure that both parties are protected. This review of the DMF in no way alleviates the API manufacturer's responsibility of notifying its customer when post-approval changes occur and ensuring that it does not affect his formulation. But in many cases, as products move into the Generic market, multiple customers with different needs and requirements, use common APIs and therefore, gaining post-approval changes by the customers becomes impossible. In many cases, some APIs have as many as 70 or more filed applications and as such, the API manufacturer can never secure an agreement between all of them that will be satisfactory. It's important to remember at this point that the API is a chemical entity that is clearly defined and well understood. It would be far better for the FDA to insist that all chemical and physical characteristics of an API be clearly defined as part of their acceptance criteria rather than try to have the applicant control post-approval changes in the API.

In summary, I believe all parties involved in the production, use, consumption and approval of APIs would be better served by placing the responsibility for post-approval changes on the DMF holder. Please consider the concept of DMF review in earnest before putting BACPAC in place.

Sincerely,



Christopher J. Smith
Director, Quality Assurance
& Regulatory Affairs

CJS/slf

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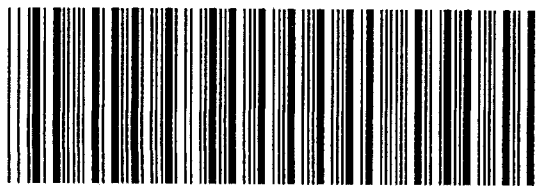
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